

They didn't understand our fiber, our character, our values. And that's one of the interesting developments in our country, is that people, as you know better than me, have said, "We better assess our values as a result of what went on." And people all across the country are doing just that. It's a moment that we must seize. Those of us in leadership position must understand that there are a lot of Americans who are asking what they can do to help. I like to put it in as plain terms as I can: If you want to fight evil, do some good.

If you want to show the world that we're not going to stand evil, let's make sure we love somebody, mentor a child. Let's get involved in the school systems in our local communities. Let's rally around those who want to help a neighbor in need. Let's seize the moment, seize the initiative, seize the chance to rally the armies of compassion, so that people feel love and decency in their lives, so that shut-ins know somebody cares, so lonely children who may have a parent in prison know somebody loves them.

This is the opportunity. I look forward to working with you to rally the country, to not only not let—to not only fight evil but to stamp in place a compassion, a decency, and a goodness that will stand the test of time. It's a challenge we face, and I know it's a challenge we can meet.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Director of Homeland Security Tom Ridge; Richard C. Reid, a passenger on American Airlines Flight AA63 who allegedly tried to ignite an explosive device in his shoe while en route from Paris to Miami on December 22, 2001; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans, LA; and Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL.

## Exchange With Reporters in Portland, Maine

January 25, 2002

### Situation in the Middle East

**Q.** Mr. President, are you consider cutting off ties to Yasser Arafat, sir?

**The President.** I am disappointed in Yasser Arafat. He must make a full effort to

rout out terror in the Middle East. In order for there to be peace, we've got to rout out terror. And ordering up weapons that were intercepted on a boat headed toward—headed for that part of the world, is not part of fighting terror, that's enhancing terror. And obviously, we're very disappointed.

**Q.** We're told that you thought his explanation was insulting, sir.

**The President.** I never said that. Thank you all.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:25 p.m. while touring the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Tahoma*. In his remarks, the President referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Remarks at Southern Maine Technical College in Portland, Maine January 25, 2002

Thank you all very much for coming. It's nice to be back in—I guess my second home. I was telling your fine Governor, Angus King—and thank you for being here, Angus. I'm so honored you're here. He said, "Are you going to come back next summer?" I said, "I knew I should have made my bed last time I was here." [Laughter] I'm not so sure my mother is going to invite me back, but I hope she does. [Laughter] Maine's a fabulous State, and as the Governor knows, it's full of such decent people. And thank you for coming out for such a warm greeting. I've got some things on my mind, and I want to share them with the good people of Maine.

First, I want to tell you, I've got a great Cabinet. I'm so proud of the way our team has responded. A leader is only good as his team. I brought two members of my Cabinet with me: Secretary Mineta, and when I picked him out of the ranks, he was a—he served the previous administration as the Commerce Secretary. He's a proud Democrat, but he showed America really what he is: He's a proud American, and he's done a fabulous job. And I knew I needed somebody who knew something about local government to run the Homeland Security Office, somebody who had been an administrator, a chief executive officer, and somebody who could